LAW OFFICE OF JEFFREY CAMPOLONGO

BY: JEFFREY CAMPOLONGO, ESQUIRE

IDENTIFICATION NO: 82608 50 MONUMENT ROAD, SUITE 101 BALA CYNWYD, PA 19004 484.434.8930 484.434.8931 (FAX) JCAMP@JCAMPLAW.COM

COUNSEL FOR PLAINTIFF

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2773

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

CHRISTINE SHELLITO 801 JACKS MILL DRIVE

BOALSBURG, PA 16827

Plaintiff,

WWW.JCAMPLAW.COM

CIVIL ACTION

NO.:

 \mathbf{v} .

JURY TRIAL DEMANDED

THE TRAVELERS COMPANIES, INC.: ONE TOWER SQUARE HARTFORD, CT 06183

Defendant.

JUN 25 2019

COMPLAINT

I. INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

- Plaintiff, Christine Shellito, (hereinafter referred to as "Ms. Shellito") alleges 1. through her counsel, the LAW OFFICE OF JEFFREY CAMPOLONGO, that her rights to be free from discrimination under Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act ("ADA"), 42 U.S.C. § 12101 et seq. and the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act ("PHRA"), 43 P.S. § 951 et seq. have been violated.
- 2. This case involves Ms. Shellito and her former employer The Travelers Companies, Inc. (hereinafter referred to as "Defendant Travelers"). Ms. Shellito worked for Travelers for over twenty-three years with a virtually unblemished track record of performance. After disclosing her medical condition to her employer, she was subjected to ongoing, escalating discrimination, harassment and retaliation by

- Travelers, which ultimately resulted in her unlawful termination of employment in November 2017.
- The Defendant's unlawful disability discrimination has harmed Ms. Shellito by discharging her which caused her to suffer ongoing wage loss and other economic and non-economic damages.

II. PARTIES

- 4. Plaintiff, Christine Shellito, is an adult female who resides at the above captioned address.
- 5. At all times material hereto, Plaintiff was an employee of Defendant Travelers.
- 6. Plaintiff worked for Defendant Travelers remotely from her home in Boalsburg, Pennsylvania, starting on July 1, 2016 and at all times material hereto was a resident of, and employed in, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.
- 7. Defendant Travelers is a corporation that has a primary business address at the above captioned address. At all relevant times, Travelers has continuously been an employer, a person, and a covered entity within the meaning of 42 U.S.C. § 12111 (2), (5) and (7), as well as the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act.
- 8. Defendant Travelers is an entity engaged in an industry or activity affecting commerce which employs 15 or more employees in all of its offices, pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 12111 (5)(A).

III. JURISDICTION and VENUE

- 9. Plaintiff incorporates by reference the previous paragraphs as if the same were set forth more fully at length herein.
- 10. Jurisdiction is conferred upon this Honorable Court by 28 U.S.C. § 1337 relating to "any civil action or proceeding arising out of any act of Congress regulating

- commerce," 28 U.S.C. § 1343(4), and 28 U.S.C. § 1331. This action is authorized and instituted pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. § 12101 et seq.
- 11. Plaintiff exhausted her administrative remedies when Plaintiff submitted a verified Charge of Discrimination to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission ("EEOC") (Charge No. 530-2019-01048) which was dual-filed with the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission ("PHRC"), on or about May 23, 2018.
- On or about March 29, 2019, Plaintiff was issued her "Dismissal and Notice of Rights" for her federal claims against Defendant.
- 13. On May 23, 2019, it had been one (1) year since the filing of the PHRC complaint, thus Plaintiff is entitled to bring her claims pursuant to the PHRA against Defendant.
- 14. This Court has personal jurisdiction over Defendant Travelers because the company systematically and continuously engages in substantial interstate commercial conduct and business activity in Pennsylvania, and the case arises out of Defendant's unlawful conduct within this Commonwealth.
- 15. Venue is appropriately laid in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania inasmuch as Defendant Travelers regularly conducts business within this District.

IV. FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS

- 16. Plaintiff incorporates by reference the previous paragraphs as if the same were set forth more fully at length herein.
- 17. Ms. Shellito was employed as an Examiner, Quality Management specializing in automobile claims by Defendant Travelers for twenty-three years. She was consistently recognized as an excellent, hard-working, and dedicated employee throughout her employment.

- 18. Since on or about January 12, 2006, Ms. Shellito worked from home as a virtual employee of Defendant Travelers.
- 19. For over a decade, this virtual employment arrangement posed no problems or issues for Defendant Travelers.
- 20. In September of 2015, Ms. Shellito made her manager, Tina Haun, department director, Amy Hennessy, and human resources generalist, Kelly McCusker, aware that she has Graves' Disease, a chronic and incurable medical condition.
- 21. Ms. Shellito's medical condition substantially limits her major life activities, including but not limited to the operation of major bodily functions such as the endocrine, circulatory, and immune systems, and other related activities.
- 22. At all times material hereto, Ms. Shellito's disability did not prevent her from performing the essential functions of her position with Defendant Travelers.
- 23. On or about November 5, 2015, Ms. Shellito submitted a request for an accommodation to continue working virtually due to her disability. Ms. Shellito provided documentation from her physician regarding her medical condition and her need to work virtually.
- 24. At the time, many of Ms. Shellito's peers and teammates worked virtually with an expectation to be in an office only three (3) days per quarter.
- 25. Nevertheless, Ms. Shellito was directed by Defendant Travelers to report to an office no fewer than three (3) days per week.
- 26. On or about December 10, 2015, Defendant Travelers approved a partial accommodation, which still required Ms. Shellito to be in the office two (2) days per week.
- 27. On or about January 25, 2016, Defendant Travelers altered Ms. Shellito's partial accommodation to require her to be in the office three (3) days per quarter.

- 28. Since requesting her accommodation, Ms. Shellito was subjected to an openly hostile work environment in which she was targeted and treated differently from her peers and teammates by Amy Hennessy and Brigette Votava, her direct manager.
- 29. Subsequent to September of 2015, Ms. Shellito's performance evaluations were inaccurate, unfair, and punitive in nature.
- 30. On or about February 16, 2016, Ms. Shellito notified Defendant Travelers that she did not agree with her 2015 performance evaluation and believed it to be retaliatory due to her previous accommodation request.
- 31. Following an HR investigation into Ms. Shellito's complaints of retaliation related to the content in her 2015 performance evaluation, Defendant Travelers refused to make any changes to the evaluation.
- 32. In January of 2017, Ms. Shellito requested that her 2016 performance evaluation be amended based upon her complaint that it was not an accurate assessment of her work product for the 2016 calendar year.
- 33. On or about April 4, 2017, Ms. Shellito was placed on a 60-day performance coaching plan. Ms. Shellito's performance was evaluated in a manner that was arbitrary, capricious, and inconsistent with the expectation and evaluation methodology applied to Ms. Shellito's peers and teammates.
- 34. The coaching plan was then changed to a 60-day performance improvement plan.
- 35. On or about August 29, 2017, Ms. Shellito pursued an Internal Dispute Resolution with Defendant Travelers, alleging retaliation for making her ADA request.
- 36. On or about October 10, 2017, Ms. Shellito was placed on a 30-day Final Performance Notice and Improvement Plan through November 19, 2017.
- 37. On November 28, 2017, Ms. Shellito's employment with Defendant Travelers was terminated.

COUNT I

DISPARATE TREATMENT AND WRONGFUL TERMINATION AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT ("ADA"), 42 U.S.C. § 12101 et seq. AND THE PENNSYLVANIA HUMAN RELATIONS ACT ("PHRA"), 43 P.S. § 951 et seq.

- 38. Plaintiff incorporates by reference each allegation contained in the preceding paragraphs as if the same were set forth more fully at length herein.
- 39. Plaintiff is a qualified individual with a disability in that she has Graves' Disease, a chronic and incurable medical condition, which substantially limits her performance of major life activities including but not limited to the operation of major bodily functions such as the endocrine, circulatory, and immune systems, and other related activities.
- 40. Plaintiff is in a protected class because she has a record of an impairment and/or was regarded as having a disability by Defendant.
- 41. Plaintiff's disability, at all times material hereto, did not prevent her from performing the essential functions of her job.
- 42. At all material times Defendant knew, or should have known, of Plaintiff's need for reasonable accommodation due to her disability.
- 43. Plaintiff made several written and unwritten requests for workplace modifications as a form of reasonable accommodation.
- 44. Defendant has subjected Plaintiff to standards not required of other non-disabled employees, resulting in disparate treatment and Plaintiff's wrongful termination of employment.
- 45. Defendant has intentionally discriminated against Plaintiff because of her disability by terminating her employment.
- 46. Plaintiff believes and avers that she was wrongfully terminated and that the

- aforementioned discrimination was based on her actual disability, record of a disability and/or her perceived mental and/or physical disability, protected by the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act.
- 47. As a result of the unlawful discrimination by Defendant Travelers as described herein, Plaintiff suffered pecuniary and non-pecuniary damages, including lost wages and benefits, out of pocket expenses, interest, emotional distress, and reasonable attorney's fees, the exact amount of which will be determined at trial.
- 48. The above-mentioned acts were willful, wanton, malicious and oppressive and done with reckless disregard for Plaintiff's federally protected rights, therefore justifying the imposition of punitive damages (under the ADA).

COUNT II

RETALIATION

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT ("ADA"), 42 U.S.C. § 12101 et seq. AND THE PENNSYLVANIA HUMAN RELATIONS ACT ("PHRA"), 43 P.S. § 951 et seq.

- 49. Plaintiff incorporates by reference the previous paragraphs as if the same were set forth more fully at length herein.
- 50. At all material times, Plaintiff engaged in protected activity when she requested reasonable accommodations for her disability to Defendant Travelers.
- 51. Plaintiff has suffered tangible adverse employment action in the forms described above, including termination of her employment.
- 52. The adverse employment action Plaintiff has suffered is a direct result of Plaintiff's engaging in protected activity.
- 53. Defendants have unlawfully retaliated against Plaintiff because the opposed conduct was made an unlawful practice by the ADA and the PHRA.
- 54. As a result of the unlawful discrimination of Defendant Travelers as described

herein, Plaintiff suffered pecuniary and non-pecuniary damages, including lost wages and benefits, out of pocket expenses, interest, emotional distress, and reasonable attorney's fees, the exact amount of which will be determined at trial.

55. The above-mentioned acts were willful, wanton, malicious and oppressive and done with reckless disregard for Plaintiff's federally protected rights, therefore justifying the imposition of punitive damages (under the ADA).

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff requests that the Court grant her the following relief against Defendant:

- (a) Damages in a sum to exceed \$150,000.00 for past and future monetary losses as a result of Defendant's unlawful discrimination;
- (b) Compensatory damages;
- (c) Punitive damages (where applicable);
- (d) Emotional pain and suffering;
- (e) Reasonable attorneys' fees;
- (f) Recoverable costs;
- (g) Pre and post judgment interest;
- (h) An allowance to compensate for negative tax consequences;
- (i) A permanent injunction enjoining Defendant, its directors, officers, employees, agents, successors, heirs and assigns, and all persons in active concert or participation with them, from engaging in, ratifying, or refusing to correct, employment practices which discriminate in violation of the ADA;
- (j) Order Defendant to institute and implement training programs, policies, practices and programs which provide equal employment opportunities for persons with present, past, or perceived disabilities;
- (k) Order Defendant to remove and expunge, or to cause to be removed and expunged, all negative, discriminatory, and/or defamatory memoranda and documentation from Plaintiff's record of employment; and
- (l) Awarding extraordinary, equitable and/or injunctive relief as permitted by law, equity and the federal statutory provisions sued hereunder, pursuant to Rules 64 and 65 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure.

LAW OFFICE OF JEFFREY CAMPOLONGO

<u>June 25, 2019</u> Date By: [JC3646 - Validation of Signature Code]
Jeffrey Campolongo
Identification No: 82608
50 Monument Road, Suite 101
Bala Cynwyd, PA 19004
(484) 434-8930
(484) 434-8931 fax

Counsel for Plaintiff

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The JS 44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replace nor supplement the filing and service of pleadings or other papers as required by law, except as

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Jeffrey Campolongo, Law Rd, Ste 101, Bala Cynwyd			ent						
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MAG JUDGE

Case 2:19-cv-02773-MAINITED STATES INISTRICT | COURTS/25/19 FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

DESIGNATION FORM

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	(to be	used by counsel or pro se pl	laintiff to indicate the category	of the case for		ignment to the appropria	te calendar)	
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Place	of Accident,	Incident or Transaction	:		Centre Cour	nty, PA		
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	2 Does this case involve the same issue of fact or grow out of the same transaction as a prior suit Yes Pending or within one year previously terminated action in this court?							
	Does this case involve the validity or infringement of a patent already in suit or any earlier numbered case pending or within one year previously terminated action of this court?							
	4 Is this case a second or successive habeas corpus, social security appeal, or pro se civil rights Yes No No No No No No No No No N							
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this court except as noted above. DATE June 25, 2019						82608		
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	TRATION CERTIFICATION on is to remove the case from eligibility for arbitration)	
Jeffrey Campolongo, counsel of record or p	r pro se plaintiff, do hereby certify	
exceed the sum of \$150,000 00 exclusive of interest and cost Relief other than monetary damages is sought ATE June 25, 2019	t of my knowledge and belief, the damages recoverable in this civil action case sts 82608 Attorney I D # (if applicable)	

NOTE A trial de novo will be a trial by jury only if there has been compliance with FRCP 38

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA



CASE MANAGEMENT TRACK DESIGNATION FORM

CHRISTINE SHE	LLITO	:	C.	IVIL ACTION		
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(b) Social Security – Cases requesting review of a decision of the Secretary of Health and Human Services denying plaintiff Social Security Benefits.						
(c) Arbitration - Cases required to be designated for arbitration under Local Civil Rule 53.2.						
(d) Asbestos – Cases involving claims for personal injury or property damage from exposure to asbestos.						
(e) Special Management – commonly referred to as the court. (See reverse management cases.)	s complex and tha	t need special or i	ntense mana	igement by	(<u>)</u>	
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June 25, 2019 Date 484-434-8930	484-434-893		Attor	Campolongo, Esc rney for Plaintiff gjcamplaw.com		
Telephone	FAX Num	ber	E-Ma	ail Address		

(Civ. 660) 10/02